

**Kris Minard – Testimony in support of SB 339
House Business and Labor, March 12, 2007**

I am a resident of Northern Jefferson County, I sit as a volunteer on the Northern Jefferson County Zoning Commission and I'm asking you to support SB 339.

Annexation across a county line is a new issue for Montana. It's a new issue for Jefferson County and Helena, and as Montana cities continue to grow, it will be a new issue for other counties too. I believe that a county line does mean something. It separates jurisdictions. It delineates between commissioners, courts, judges, sheriffs, clerk and recorders, county attorneys, planning boards, zoning commissions and coroners to name a few.

Years ago, our state legislature required each county to put thoughtful consideration into planned growth by producing a growth policy. We've done that. No where in our growth policy does it say "Let's see if we can get our northernmost land annexed into the city across the county line and watch how they handle growth."

The legislature has been very careful not to make growth policies regulatory documents, but these policies do help each county keep perspective on growth, how it is planned for and how it can be sustained. We have a policy, please let us use it.

Growth happens, no doubt about it. We can't stop it, nor do we want to stop it. But if our county is annexed away, piece by piece... our citizen initiated zoning flat out disappears. I understand that zoning laws are not to be considered permanent and unchangeable. Thoughtful zoning should continue to provide for a transition from the higher density city lots to larger acreages enjoyed by those who value and invest in a rural setting.

The big question is: Who should have the authority to plan for growth in our county? Should it be the folks in a neighboring city, across the county line? Or should it be the county.... The people who live there?

Please vote "yes" on SB 339. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.